

Études Ricœuriennes / Ricœur Studies



The Paris Debate

Ricœur's Public Intervention and Private Reflections on the Status and Meaning of Christian Philosophy in the 1930s

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Abstract

This article explores Paul Ricœur's early writings in the 1930s on Christian philosophy. It seeks to contextualize both his published and unpublished works from that period within the robust historical, philosophical and theological debates in Paris between the leading intellectuals of the time: Bréhier, Gilson, Blondel, Brunschvicg, Marcel, Maury, de Lubac, and Barth. The article proceeds to examine Ricœur's own position within these debates.

Keywords: Christian Philosophy, Reason, Faith, Immanence, Transcendence

Résumé

Cet article explore les premiers écrits de Paul Ricœur des années 1930 sur la philosophie chrétienne. Il tente de contextualiser à la fois ses travaux publiés et les inédits, dans une période, à Paris, marquée par des débats d'envergure sur le plan historiographique, philosophique et théologique, débats qui ont engagé de grands intellectuels de l'époque: Bréhier, Gilson, Blondel, Brunschvicg, Marcel, Maury, de Lubac, ainsi que Barth. L'article se poursuit pour examiner la position propre de Ricœur dans ces débats.

Mots-clés: Philosophie chrétienne, Raison, Foi, Immanence, Transcendance

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Introduction

It is often noted that Ricœur sought to separate his philosophical writings from his theological writings. Perhaps nowhere is this dual program more explicitly enunciated than in *Soi-même comme un autre*, which, in his words, pursues an “autonomous philosophical discourse.”¹ It is well-known that the original Gifford Lectures included two studies on biblical hermeneutics so as to remain faithful to the founder's will for the lectures to be on ‘natural theology.’² They were removed, however, from *Soi-même comme un autre* to remain faithful to the separation of philosophy and theology that Ricœur maintained throughout his life.³ Despite his claims to ‘conceptual asceticism,’ recent works in Ricœur studies attest that his thought continues to resonate and appeal within philosophy of religion and theology.⁴ Surely, part of the reason for the continued fascination with his work is that it accesses and illuminates the frontiers and limits of philosophy from multiple approaches, perspectives, and disciplines. But part of the interest can be attributable to counter-claims that Ricœur himself makes, particularly towards the end of his career, that complicate and nuance his own purported conceptual asceticism.⁵

This article does *not* attempt a global or comprehensive resolution to Ricœur's reflections on the relationship between philosophy and theology, for it seems to me that his own understanding on the issue was always provisional and developed over time. Instead, my aims are much more limited and modest by focusing on his early writings in the 1930s on “Christian philosophy.” His works during this period are often either neglected altogether or referred to as the years when he engaged social Christianity.⁶ But in my judgment, they merit closer examination for a couple of important reasons. Firstly, his published article, entitled “Note sur les rapports de la philosophie et du christianisme” (1936), was his distinct contribution to what was *the* intellectual debate in Paris in the early to mid-1930s.⁷ The issue regarding the status and meaning of Christian philosophy engaged the leading historians, philosophers and theologians of the time: Émile Bréhier, Étienne Gilson, Maurice Blondel, Léon Brunschvicg, Jacques Maritain, Gabriel Marcel, Auguste Lecerf, Pierre Maury, and Henri de Lubac. Moreover, the debate took on additional vigor with Karl Barth's first visit to Paris in 1934 when he lectured in front of many of these French luminaries. An examination of Ricœur's reflections on Christian philosophy, then, sheds light on the important debates and broader context of his thought during his early formative years. Secondly, and more germane to current Ricœur studies, his public intervention and private writings during this period offer the first glimpse of his critical reception of Barth and his first tentative formulation on the relationship between philosophy and Christianity. While there are now a number of excellent studies that rightly note the deep resonances and affinities between Ricœur and Barth for the purposes of building up a *constructive* understanding of the nature and task of theology,⁸ a close examination of the *historical* reception of Barth by Ricœur

remains absent from the current literature. This article seeks to address this gap by contextualizing the Paris debates over the status and meaning of Christian philosophy during the 1930s and by examining Ricœur's own position on the issue with primary attention to the early published article in consultation with his unpublished thesis and his personal notes taken from the period.

The Paris Debate

Debates on the nature and task of Christian philosophy can be traced as far back to the origins of Christianity itself. But that abiding issue was renewed and reinvigorated in the early 1930s in Paris, drawing responses from leading historians, philosophers, and theologians of the day. Initially, the debate was between the two leading intellectual historians of the day – Émile Bréhier and Étienne Gilson – who both wrote influential works on the history of philosophy, but disagreed about the very nature and meaning of philosophy itself. Bréhier's ambitious, sweeping, three-volume work, *Histoire de la philosophie*,⁹ not only traced the history and development of Western thought, but also sought to show the methodological independence and integrity of the history of philosophy in relation to the history of other disciplines. From an historical approach, then, Bréhier argued that there was no Christian philosophy because Christianity did not *substantially* influence the development of philosophical thought. The scope of his work is truly vast, but the significance of this point was not lost on others as it drew responses from many, including Gilson. At a fateful session on March 21, 1931 at the Société française de philosophie,¹⁰ Gilson, who was then in the course of preparing his Gifford Lectures on the essence of the spirit of medieval philosophy, offered a counter-argument, precisely on historical grounds, that Christianity transformed the nature of philosophy itself.¹¹ Aquinas, to take just one example, transformed Aristotelian thought in a way that inexorably altered philosophical notions such as the idea of creation, the idea of the person, and so on.

In the eyes of many at the time, Gilson won the debate regarding the historical question as to whether there exists a Christian philosophy. As Henri de Lubac observed: "As quickly as he arrived, Mr. Bréhier found himself nearly forgotten and the defenders of Christian philosophy were busier discussing amongst themselves on their respective conceptions."¹² What began as a narrow dispute within medieval intellectual history, then, took on broader significance. No longer was the debate about *whether* Christian philosophy exists, but rather *what* its precise nature was. Brunschvicg, for instance, argued that while a philosopher may be Christian, it is only accidental in the same manner in which there may be a Christian who writes on mathematics or medicine. Maritain, to take another example, distinguished between the essence and state of philosophy such that while philosophy always uses natural reason, its condition of exercise has changed. Blondel went further by arguing that if philosophy wants to insist on rationality, it must also acknowledge its incomplete character, and that religion shows itself in the extension of philosophy. All the eminent philosophers of the day, it seemed, were weighing in on the debate.

Given the context and contestation over the very meaning of Christian philosophy, one can imagine the anticipation and stir that Karl Barth's first visit to Paris in April 1934 must have created. His reputation had, in fact, preceded him due in large part to the work of Pierre Maury,¹³ who spread the new insights of his thought to the French context by publishing his articles¹⁴ and translating his writings.¹⁵ Indeed, Maury presented some of Barth's ideas on Christian philosophy before the Société française de philosophie on December 23, 1933.¹⁶

Representing what are now familiar, but what must have been provocative ideas at the time, Maury explains that Barth unapologetically refuses to elaborate a Christian philosophy as there is no point of contact outside of what God establishes. "It is impossible to define *philosophically* the unifying principle of the thought of Karl Barth," Maury began the session, "because his thought does not want to be philosophical, but rather theological."¹⁷

This is all to say that when Barth visited Paris in 1934, it was with much excitement and anticipation. Gilson had just taught a course at the Collège de France on Anselm that ended with a critical discussion of the interpretation proposed by Barth.¹⁸ Yves Congar, the great Catholic thinker, prepared a course specifically on Barth in anticipation of his visit.¹⁹ He would recall later that Barth's three lectures at the Sorbonne,²⁰ his lectures at the Faculté protestante de théologie,²¹ and his lunchtime discussion at Juvisy would be attended by luminaries such as Gilson, Maritain, Marcel, and Maury amongst others. If Maury prepared the French audience for his provocative ideas, Barth did not disappoint. As Bernard Reymond states of his Sorbonne lectures, "From the first page, one experiences the very clear sense of finding oneself in a combative discourse, sometimes a bit provocative, destined to arouse reactions."²² In his first lecture, for instance, Barth insists that revelation is not submitted to philosophical reflection into the conditions for its possibility, but rather it is given freely as the divine sovereign act of God.²³ Theology, then, he proceeded to argue, does not require philosophy to justify or ground its existence since revelation itself is authoritative. Barth's rejection of the notion of Christian philosophy would be underlined particularly in his third lecture that addressed theology. "Is there nothing more regrettable," he rhetorically asks in that lecture, "than the attempt, developed over the centuries, to determine a systematic link or, conversely, a systematic distinction between the domain of theology and that of philosophy? . . . It is evident that theology can only become interesting for philosophy from the instant where it renounces interest in it."²⁴

What began as a narrow debate within intellectual history became a much broader conversation about the possibility and nature of Christian philosophy that engaged the leading thinkers of the time. By 1936, only five years after that fateful session with Gilson at the Société française de philosophie, it seemed that every major significant figure in French thought contributed to that debate so that Henri de Lubac would write, "Is it a bit late to speak of it again? . . . For roughly five years, everyone was required to respond: Is there a Christian philosophy? And in which sense? And to which conditions?"²⁵

Ricœur's Private Reflections and Public Intervention into the Paris Debate

When Ricœur published his article, "Note sur les rapports de la philosophie et du christianisme" in 1936, he was perhaps a little late to the public debate in Paris, but it was, in fact, a subject on which he had reflected for a number of years. His dissertation, which he submitted in 1934 entitled *Méthode réflexive appliquée au problème de Dieu chez Lachelier et Lagneau*, already gave the first indications of his critique of the doctrine of immanence in reflexive philosophies and his proposal for a Christian doctrine of transcendence. On the one hand, Lachelier and Lagneau were both right, according to Ricœur, to make God the central idea in reflexive method.²⁶ But he argues that such philosophies remain incomplete if they depart from and return to thought, reducing God to the All of human thought within a doctrine of immanence.²⁷ The reflexive method then requires a consideration of a philosophy of faith; beyond the God of philosophers and beyond doctrines of immanentism, the philosopher needs to consider the transcendent and living God of the Christian tradition.²⁸ Such a doctrine of transcendence,

Ricœur suggests, does not oppose and contradict a doctrine of immanence, but rather deepens and further interiorizes it.²⁹ As he states in the final words of the précis that he handed to his thesis committee, quoting Blondel: “To move us to ourselves, we have to exit from us before re-entering.”³⁰ Ricœur’s thesis indicates his first attempts to probe the limits of a broadened method and understanding of reflexive philosophy, one critical of the regnant idealisms of the day and more open and friendly to Christian philosophy. For whatever reason, his thesis was never published, and so the remainder of this article will focus on the article that Ricœur did publish in 1936, “Note sur les rapports de la philosophie et du christianisme.” Not only does it signal further reflections on Christian philosophy, but it also indicates his first reflections on Barthian theology to which he was introduced during the interim period.

Ricœur begins the article by stating that theologians often condemn philosophy, and that he seeks to investigate the reasons underlying the Christian critique of philosophy, on the one hand, and then to explore the Christian status of philosophy, properly understood. In the first part of the article, then, which deals with the critique of philosophies, he divides them broadly into two major camps: spiritualists and materialists. Because there is a large gap and little interest for rapprochement between Christianity and materialists, he focuses his attention on two distinct and representative strands in spiritualist philosophy: Brunschvicg’s rationalism and Bergson’s mysticism. Brunschvicg propounds a “philosophy of spirit” that emphasizes the *intellectual effort of man* to constitute knowledge and action. Each of these terms is important on Ricœur’s reading of Brunschvicg, and so he takes some time explaining the meaning and significance of each. By “effort,” Ricœur notes that Brunschvicg underlines that spirit is movement in history that marks intellectual progress.³¹ By “intellectual,” Brunschvicg emphasizes that effort culminates in clear judgment and understanding common to all individuals, where the ideal form of reason is mathematics. Within this intellectualist schema, then, Christianity is a dream for satisfaction that is incompatible with pure spiritualism and is viewed as regression to the inferior status of a myth. “All effort to surpass the clarity of mathematics,” so goes the argument, “only succeeds in bringing us back to the inferior level of vital instinct, infantilism, and collective myths.”³² Reason, far from subordinating itself to the mystery of faith and acknowledging the internal contradiction of sin, seeks to move beyond it.³³ The effort *within* man strives to move beyond the ‘material force’ of determinate religions to freedom in spiritual and intellectual life. The true essence of religion, on this account, is nothing other than pure absolute spirit, and the final site of revelation is man. In a statement that echoes his critiques of Lachelier and Lagneau, Ricœur states of Brunschvicg’s idealism: “But this God, who is neither separated, nor personal, nor conscious of itself, nor mysterious, nor revealed, what is it then? The idea of unity, the copula of judgment, the bare power of thought...*man himself*.”³⁴ Brunschvicg’s philosophy – its supreme confidence in human powers of reason and its pride in overcoming mystery and paradox – is, on Ricœur’s account, incompatible with and contrary to Christian faith.

Next, Ricœur turns his attention to Bergson’s philosophy of mysticism. While Ricœur acknowledges that Bergson is right to defend mysticism against a narrow rationalism, he also empties it of any historical, dogmatic, and liturgical elements: “The profound opinion of Bergson,” Ricœur writes, “is that theological language and the images of piety are a contingent form, an impure matrix in which mysticism can and must be liberated.”³⁵ Whatever differences exist between the rationalism of Brunschvicg and the mysticism of Bergson, Ricœur finds that both attempt to move beyond historical Christianity in all its mystery and paradox.³⁶ In concluding his critique of such philosophies, Ricœur quotes Gabriel Marcel: “From the moment

when the philosopher searches for any process to attenuate this scandal, to mask this paradox, to re-absorb the revealed given in a dialectic of reason or spirit, in this precise measure, he ceases to be a Christian philosopher."³⁷ To this point in the article, Ricœur offers a strong and bold critique of the contemporary philosophies of Brunschvicg and Bergson that reaffirm and recapitulate in many ways his earlier critique of the 19th century philosophies of Lachelier and Lagneau. Philosophy remains incomplete and inadequate if it reduces the All to human effort within a doctrine of immanence and fails to consider Christian faith in all its paradox and mystery.

If Ricœur offers firm critiques of the major strands in contemporary French philosophy, born from years working and reflecting on his thesis, his positive proposal for the status of philosophy within Christianity remains more tentative and searching, trying to grapple with the new insights of Barth. One model for Christian philosophy is what he calls a "synthesis" between philosophy and Christianity. The term is perhaps misleading because he does not mean by it the enfolding of the mysteries of Christian faith into a higher form of rationalist philosophy as Brunschvicg suggested, but rather he simply seeks "to link the common problems of philosophy to the teachings of faith."³⁸ But insofar as the two disciplines share *common* problems, the synthesis would be subjected strictly to the rational or natural criteria of philosophy. On the one hand, Ricœur finds such a conception of Christian philosophy to be legitimate because it is delimited to its proper purview, but, on the other hand, it is restricted to a narrow form of rationality that is to be surpassed. Regarding both the legitimacy and limitation of a synthetic understanding of Christian philosophy, Ricœur quotes Maury in a footnote in the article: "To the extent where it is not usurped, it is not only legitimate, but commanded. We have something to do on earth, for which God has placed us. One must only recognize that all science, like all human activity, tends almost necessarily to be usurped."³⁹ The reference to Maury – and indirectly to Barth – is significant because Ricœur seems to tacitly affirm the validity of philosophy that is freed up not in spite of Christian faith, but precisely because of it.

Christian philosophy, however, runs into problems when it attempts to extend the limits of reason by employing an apologetic method that approaches faith by natural and human means, for disagreements arise on the issue of whether one can speak of God outside of revelation. Ricœur proceeds to delineate two poles on this issue. At one end of the spectrum, there is Thomism, which Ricœur characterizes as a form of natural theology that prepares the way or serves as a foundation for revelation.⁴⁰ Interestingly, his private notes from this period reveal a much more sophisticated understanding of Thomism.⁴¹ Indeed, this more nuanced interpretation finds its way in a footnote in the article when he writes, "absolutely speaking, this philosophy of God is not a *Christian philosophy* since it is the perfect work of reason and only raised up by rational criteria. But in fact, this philosophy requires a *Christian state* and would not be possible without Christianity."⁴² For the larger purposes of the article, however, Ricœur uses a certain understanding of Thomism as representative of a position where philosophy is preparatory of and foundation for theology.

At the other end of the spectrum, there is Barthianism which argues that revelation completely escapes any approach by rational means. For Barth, as Ricœur underlines, "there is no natural theology, no Christian philosophy. There is only the relation of man with God from the initiative of God."⁴³ But if Ricœur publicly characterized Thomism as positing philosophy as preparatory and foundational for theology, even as he privately noted its affirmation in the priority of the Word of God, so too, he publicly characterized Barth as rejecting the place of natural knowledge even as he privately sought to uncover resources within Calvinist thought for a Christian philosophy.⁴⁴ Ricœur seemed to be interested, in particular, in the notion of natural

theology in Calvin as a way into thinking about the issue of Christian philosophy and whether there can be a philosopher of faith.

In any case, it is clear that Ricœur uses Thomism and Barthianism as foils to mark out a broad spectrum in thought over the possibility of Christian philosophy. Interestingly, however, he does not opt for one over the other, for that decision, he suggests, finally hinges on one's beliefs and authorities about the doctrine of sin. If one believes in a doctrine of radical sin that profoundly deformed humans, then humans cannot approach or re-find God on their own powers. If, on the other hand, there is belief in a certain positivity about humans that remains unaltered in spite of sin, then human powers and capabilities can do some work in preparing for and approaching the knowledge of God. Rather than to re-open that debate and renew age-old divisions, he seeks points of common agreement and consensus. Even if one concedes a positive, apologetic role in preparing philosophy for the truths of Christianity, he argues that it also must maintain a negative function that critiques the pretensions of the sciences and philosophies that purport to be an ultimate solution.⁴⁵ Whatever else Christian philosophy might mean, it is, in his words, "a science of limits."⁴⁶ Ricœur, then, seems to remain uncommitted as to what positive sense, if any, Christian philosophy can hold, and instead, he opts for a minimalistic understanding to which Thomists and Barthians alike could agree, one which would employ Socratic irony to reveal the ignorance of human wisdom, or at least to deflate totalitarian forms of thought.⁴⁷

Conclusion

In the 1930s we see a young Ricœur critically reflecting on the leading philosophical movements and grappling with the major theological developments of the day for the purposes of engaging *the* intellectual debate in Paris at the time on the status and meaning of Christian philosophy. His early article, his unpublished thesis, and private notes from the period provide insight into the broader context of his thought during his formative years as well as the first tentative steps he took on reflecting about the relationship between philosophy and Christianity. What emerges during this early period is a picture of a resolute and firm Ricœur regarding how contemporary philosophies remain incompatible with Christian faith as well as the possible import of Christian philosophy to critique and deflate precisely the totalitarian claims of such approaches. While Ricœur is entirely clear and just in both his critique of the reflective philosophies of his day and his suggestion for Christian philosophy to set proper limits, what remains murkier, at least at this stage, is whether there is a positive vision for Christian philosophy in his thought. His reflections on the matter, however, were not merely an occasional work or a passing period in his thought, but rather it was an issue to which he would turn time and again throughout his career with each development becoming ever more complex and nuanced, and yet, in a manner consistent with his own position, it always remained provisional.

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¹ Paul Ricœur, *Soi-même comme un autre* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1990), 36. Paul Ricœur, *Oneself as Another*, trans. Kathleen Blamey (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 24.

² Both lectures can be found in Paul Ricœur, *Amour et justice* (Paris: Éditions Points, 2008).

³ In a much quoted passage, Ricœur states: "The ten studies that make up this work assume the bracketing, conscious and resolute, of the convictions that bind me to biblical faith. I do not claim that at the deep level of motivations these convictions remain without any effect on the interest that I take in this or that problem, even in the overall problematic of the self. But I think I have presented to my readers arguments alone, which do not assume any commitment from the reader to reject, accept, or suspend anything with regard to biblical faith. It will be observed that this asceticism of the argument, which marks, I believe, all my philosophical work, leads to a type of philosophy from which the actual mention of God is absent and in which the question of God, as a philosophical question, itself remains in a suspension that could be called agnostic." Ricœur, *Soi-même comme un autre*, 36. Ricœur, *Oneself as Another*, 24.

⁴ Indeed, the previous issue of this journal indicates the ongoing interest on the relationship between philosophy and religion in Ricœur's thought: *Études Ricœuriennes/Ricœur Studies* 3, n.2 (2012). For other recent works, see Dan Stiver, *Ricœur and Theology* (London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2012); Luca Posatti, *Ricœur face à l'analogie: Entre théologie et deconstruction* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2012); Pierre Bühler and Daniel Frey, ed., *Paul Ricœur: un philosophe lit la Bible* (Genève: Labor et Fides, 2011).

⁵ Because these later statements were usually expressed in interviews or oral presentations, they do not seem to hold the same weight as his written statements. Still, it does bear at least mentioning that such a tension exists. He states in an interview with Richard Kearney, for instance, "My thought is not so removed from certain religious and biblical issues as my standard policy of 'conceptual asceticism' might have been prepared to admit in the past. I am not sure about the absolute irreconcilability between the God of the Bible and the God of Being...I no longer consider such conceptual asceticism tenable." Richard Kearney, *Debates in Continental Philosophy: Conversations with Contemporary Thinkers* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2004), 45. Or again, at the conclusion of a conference in Chicago in his honor, he states: "Several speakers here have underlined my insistence on not mixing discourses. But now I feel freer to be attentive to the correlations and even to the unwrapping of the different fields of theology and philosophy." Paul Ricœur, "Ethics and Human Capability: A Response," in *Paul Ricœur and Contemporary Moral Thought*, eds. John Wall, William Schweiker, and W. David Hall (New York: Routledge, 2002), 283. See also Paul Ricœur, "Paul

Ricœur: Nous sommes responsable du périssable," *L'actualité religieuse dans le monde* 91 (July-August 1991): 44.

- ⁶ For a notable exception, see Marc-Antoine Vallée, "Le premier écrit philosophique de Paul Ricœur: Méthode réflexive appliquée au problème de Dieu chez Lachelier et Lagneau," *Études Ricœuriennes/Ricœur Studies* 3, n.1 (2012): 144-155. For a fine overview of Ricœur's engagement with social Christianity in the 1930s, see François Dosse, "L'engagement socialiste parce que chrétien," in *Paul Ricœur: Les sens d'une vie* (Paris: Éditions la Découverte, 1997), 41-57.
- ⁷ Paul Ricœur, "Notes sur les rapports de la philosophie et du christianisme," *Le Semeur* 38, n.9 (July 1936): 541-557. Incidentally, Barth also contributed articles to the journal. See Karl Barth, "Réponse à quelques questions," *Le Semeur* 37, n.1 (November 1934): 1-10; Karl Barth, "1940-1944. Lettres aux français," *Le Semeur* 43, n.1 (November 1944): 4-26.
- ⁸ Mark I. Wallace, *The Second Naiveté: Barth, Ricœur, and the New Yale Theology* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1990); Dan R. Stiver, *Theology After Ricœur: New Directions in Hermeneutical Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001); Boyd Blundell, *Paul Ricœur Between Theology and Philosophy: Detour and Return* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010); Luca Posatti, *Ricœur face à l'analogie: Entre théologie et deconstruction* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2012).
- ⁹ Émile Bréhier, *Histoire de la philosophie*, 3 vols. (Paris: Alcan, 1928).
- ¹⁰ The first Congrès international de philosophie was held in Paris on August 1-5, 1900. A few months afterward the Société française de philosophie was formed as a national association and held its first session on February 7, 1901. Bernard Bourgeois situates the developments of both organizations within the nineteenth century movement towards an open and cosmopolitan society. See Bernard Bourgeois, "La société des philosophes en France en 1900," in *Le moment 1900 en philosophie*, ed. Frédéric Worms (Paris: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 2004), 63-79.
- ¹¹ Étienne Gilson, "La notion de philosophie chrétienne," *Bulletin de la Société française de Philosophie* 31 (March 21, 1931): 37-85.
- ¹² Henri de Lubac, "Sur la philosophie chrétienne," in *Recherches dans la foi: Trois études sur Origène, Saint Anselme et la philosophie chrétienne* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1979), 128-129. Originally published in *Nouvelle revue théologique* (1936).
- ¹³ It was W.A. Visser't Hooft who first introduced Maury to Barth in 1925. Maury was a significant figure in twentieth century French Reformed Protestantism, becoming editor of *Foi et vie* and *Le Semeur*, succeeding Auguste Lecerf as chair of dogmatics at Faculté de théologie protestant de Paris in 1943, and succeeding Marc Boegner as president of the Conseil de l'Eglise réformée de France in 1950.
- ¹⁴ As early as 1928, Maury requested to translate and publish Barth's essays into French in *Foi et vie* where he was assistant editor and later became editor-in-chief in 1930. See Karl Barth and Pierre Maury, *Nous qui pouvons encore parler...Correspondance 1928-1956*, ed. Bernard Reymond (Switzerland: L'Âge d'Homme, 1985), 19.

- ¹⁵ Karl Barth, *Parole de Dieu et parole humaine*, trad. Pierre Maury and Auguste Lavanchy (Paris: Société Commerciale d'Édition et de Librairie, 1933).
- ¹⁶ Pierre Maury, "Quelques grandes orientations de la pensée de Karl Barth," *Bulletin de la Société française de Philosophie* 33 (December 23, 1933): 189-217.
- ¹⁷ Maury, "Quelques grandes orientations de la pensée de Karl Barth," 189.
- ¹⁸ For more on Gilson and Barth on Anselm, see Bernard Reymond, *Théologien ou prophète: Les francophones et Karl Barth avant 1945* (Lausanne: Édition l'Âge d'Homme, 1985), 157-166.
- ¹⁹ Yves M.-J. Congar, *Chrétiens en dialogue: Contributions catholique à l'Œcuménisme* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1964), xxi.
- ²⁰ For the publication of his lectures at Sorbonne, see Karl Barth, *Révélation, Église, Théologie. Trois conférences*, trad. Pierre Maury (Paris: Éditions "Je sers," 1934).
- ²¹ To my knowledge, his lecture at the Faculté protestante de théologie was never published, but his responses to questions put forth by students can be found in Karl Barth, "Réponse à quelques questions," *Le Semeur* 37, n.1 (November 1934): 1-10.
- ²² Reymond, *Théologien ou prophète. Les francophones et Karl Barth avant 1945*, 141-142.
- ²³ Barth, *Révélation, Église, Théologie*, 7.
- ²⁴ Barth, *Révélation, Église, Théologie*, 41.
- ²⁵ de Lubac, "Sur la philosophie chrétienne," 127.
- ²⁶ "One must pay homage to Lachelier et Lagneau to have recalled that there is only one problem: the problem of God." Archives Ricœur, Fonds Ricœur – Bibliothèque de l'I.P.T.-Paris, Inventaire 1, Boîte 12, Dossier 41b, *Méthode réflexive appliquée au problème de Dieu chez Lachelier et Lagneau*, 193.
- ²⁷ "I believe that a doctrine of immanence, for it to be true, remains incomplete without a doctrine of transcendence, still interior to a doctrine of immanence" (Ricœur, *Méthode réflexive appliquée au problème de Dieu chez Lachelier et Lagneau*, 202). Fifty years later, he agrees with his earlier assessment of Lagneau when he states, "That we are here in a philosophy of immanence without transcendence is beyond doubt nor unprecedented." See Paul Ricœur, "Le jugement et la méthode réflexive selon Jules Lagneau," *Bulletin de la Société française de philosophie* 88, n.4 (October-December 1994): 131.
- ²⁸ "The passage from the philosophical God to the Christian God, from the God who is only a copula of judgment to the God who is love, that's the final problem in the philosophy of Lachelier." (Ricœur, *Méthode réflexive appliquée au problème de Dieu chez Lachelier et Lagneau*, 94). And again, "The living God of the Christian tradition adds fullness to the purity of the God of philosophers." Ricœur, *Méthode réflexive appliquée au problème de Dieu chez Lachelier et Lagneau*, feuillet 6135.
- ²⁹ "It is by collaboration with the Other that we discover the Same, that we realize our depth." Ricœur, *Méthode réflexive appliquée au problème de Dieu chez Lachelier et Lagneau*, 200.

- ³⁰ Ricœur, *Méthode réflexive appliquée au problème de Dieu chez Lachelier et Lagneau*, feuillet 6136. The citation of Blondel is all the more striking given that he repeats his indebtedness to him in a number of other critical passages in his thesis. For instance, Ricœur acknowledges that it was Blondel who inspired his critique of the reflexive philosophies of Lachelier and Lagneau. Ibid., 192.
- ³¹ Paul Ricœur, "Notes sur les rapports de la philosophie et du christianisme," *Le Semeur* 38, n.9 (July 1936): 543.
- ³² Ricœur, "Notes sur les rapports de la philosophie et du christianisme," 544.
- ³³ Ricœur, "Notes sur les rapports de la philosophie et du christianisme," 544.
- ³⁴ Ricœur, "Notes sur les rapports de la philosophie et du christianisme," 545.
- ³⁵ Ricœur, "Notes sur les rapports de la philosophie et du christianisme," 547.
- ³⁶ Ricœur, "Notes sur les rapports de la philosophie et du christianisme," 547.
- ³⁷ Ricœur, "Notes sur les rapports de la philosophie et du christianisme," 548.
- ³⁸ Ricœur, "Notes sur les rapports de la philosophie et du christianisme," 550.
- ³⁹ Ricœur, "Notes sur les rapports de la philosophie et du christianisme," 550n1. Quoted from Pierre Maury, "Quelques grandes orientations de la pensée de K. Barth," *Bulletin de la Société française de philosophie* (December 23, 1933): 212.
- ⁴⁰ Ricœur, "Notes sur les rapports de la philosophie et du christianisme," 551ff.
- ⁴¹ Shortly after he prepared his article, he attended a debate between Gilson and Lecerf on 'Christianity and philosophy' on April 25, 1936 at the Faculté de théologie protestante in Paris. In that debate Gilson rejects Lecerf's characterization of Christian philosophy as a rational foundation for revealed Christian theology. Proofs for the existence of God, for example then, are not mere deductions of human reason alone, but already presuppose Christian faith. The talk delivered by Gilson became the first chapter and the impetus for *Christianisme et philosophie* (Paris: J.Vrin, 1936). Ricœur seems to agree with Gilson's claim that for both medieval Catholics and the Reformers, Christian faith is "founded" on the Word of God. For Ricœur's notes, see Archives Ricœur, Fonds Ricœur – Bibliothèque de l'I.P.T.-Paris, Inventaire 1, Boîte 38, dossier 9, *Philosophie chrétienne. Notes et notes de lecture (1932-1939)*, feuillet 20232.
- ⁴² Ricœur, "Notes sur les rapports de la philosophie et du christianisme," 553n1.
- ⁴³ Ricœur, "Notes sur les rapports de la philosophie et du christianisme," 554.
- ⁴⁴ From his private notes, it is evident that he attended a presentation by Maury at a conference in Paris on natural theology according to Calvin and wrote extensive notes on both the presentation and the subsequently published article that came out of it: "D'où procède la connaissance de Dieu? (Note sur la théologie naturelle d'après Calvin)" (1935). Ricœur notes that for Maury there is a deep ambiguity in Calvin, who wants to maintain both that God manifests Godself in nature outside of Revelation, and yet that we do not know this natural Revelation. Archives Ricœur, *Philosophie chrétienne. Notes et*

notes de lecture (1932-1939), feuillets 20221, 20228. Ricœur also notes that such a position is, in fact, not very different from Catholic philosophers who argued that philosophy can speak of God by reason, but that reason presupposes faith (ibid., feuillet 20222). As he was reading Maury on Calvin, he also added notes from a debate between Gilson and Lecerf. Gilson seems to be making a similar point to Maury when he argues that there are resources within Calvin's thought that allow for a Christian philosophy, since Calvin left open a place for the natural knowledge of God. Gilson then encourages a Calvinist theologian to maintain the ambiguous poles of both the Word of God and the natural knowledge of God that exists in Calvin's thought. See Gilson, *Christianisme et philosophie*, 69-72. What Ricœur seems to find most interesting in Gilson's analysis is the notion of philosophy by a believer in Calvinist thought (Ricœur, *Philosophie chrétienne. Notes et notes de lecture (1932-1939)*, feuillet 20228). What is at stake are different strands and interpretations of Calvinism – one represented by Lecerf and Barth, the other represented by Gilson and perhaps Ricœur and Maury – over the status of philosophy in theological enterprise.

⁴⁵ Ricœur, "Notes sur les rapports de la philosophie et du christianisme," 556.

⁴⁶ Ricœur, "Notes sur les rapports de la philosophie et du christianisme," 556.

⁴⁷ Ricœur, "Notes sur les rapports de la philosophie et du christianisme," 557.